

PALANCA

WHAT IS PALANCA?

Within the DeColores community we usually think of palanca as being the gifts and acts of love that we do for others. But what exactly is palanca?

Palanca is a Spanish word that means "lever." Just as a lever enables a person to move something which is beyond normal strength, palanca, as used in DeColores, empowers the accomplishment of things which would not be possible without the Grace of God. I think our greatest desire on a DeColores weekend is that hearts would be touched by the presence of our Lord and that lives would forever be transformed by His amazing grace. That is something that we cannot do in and of ourselves - it takes the work of the Holy Spirit. Palanca, the gifts and acts of love that we do, are a lever in the hands of the Spirit of God to help open the hearts of the candidates to the love of God.

Today, perhaps more than ever, it is necessary to remind ourselves that without God we are nothing, bereft of value, and incapable of doing anything of spiritual value. With that in mind, we must keep the concept of palanca in balance. In other words, whatever service we perform on a DeColores weekend will have little or no value if done in and of ourselves. Palanca, which is one of the most characteristic marks of the DeColores method, is effective only when the prayers, sacrifices and works of mercy are done in conjunction with the presence of the Holy Spirit; allowing God to use us to serve his people.

If the effectiveness of all the human efforts in the DeColores movement is to be assured, palanca must be genuine and offered by communities and individuals living in union with Christ. The purpose of palanca is to serve as God's hands of love in the lives of the candidates on the weekend by extending the grace which has so freely been extended to us.

Bear in mind that letters in and of themselves are not palanca. Letters are merely one vehicle in which we convey the actual palanca being done at that time. In other words, the effort, thoughts and prayers that go into the letters are actually the palanca, not the letters themselves. Palanca can fall into several categories; not all of which result in notes or letters.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF PALANCA?

PERSONAL

GENERAL

SERVICE

PERSONAL PALANCA: This is palanca performed on behalf of individual candidates and team members. It is most frequently demonstrated in personal notes that are not meant for anyone but the recipient.

DO THIS:

- A brief note of encouragement.
- Reassurance that God will meet the candidate right where he is.
- Adding an encouraging scripture is recommended (reminding of God's promises, etc).
- Let them know you are praying for them (and do it!).
- It is important to have personal palanca available for Friday and Saturday. (It's a lever, so use it).
- You can include small items that can fit in an envelope such as "pass it on" cards, small bookmarks, small pins, etc.
- If you give a gift, please keep it small. Remember that not all the candidates will receive gifts and for one person to receive many gifts or very large gifts can be awkward. Also remember that it is not the gift, but the love and sacrifice behind the gift, letting the person know that they are loved and valued by you and by God.

DON'T DO THIS:

- Do not refer to any special events that happen over the weekend. Your palanca may not be delivered when you expect it to be, so you wouldn't want to spoil the surprise.
- Do not refer to home or family. It's important to maintain the focus and sequestered nature of the weekend.
- Do not talk about how you felt on your weekend. The candidate may be having a very different experience and you wouldn't want to set him or her up for disappointment.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- When you come to the church where the weekend is being held, there will be signs posted as to where you should drop off your palanca.
- Make sure your cards or gifts are marked for the intended person or "general" if you have copies of notes for all the team and candidates.
- Remember that the first palanca is not distributed until Friday afternoon.
- Palanca is generally distributed five times during the weekend. You can leave something for your candidate for each drop.
- You cannot (and should not) write all of the palanca yourself. You are encouraged to contact other Curcillistas to write to your candidate (and you can write to theirs). Ask Curcillistas in your church or Reunion Group, or perhaps those you have served with on a team, or experienced a weekend with to send palanca to your candidate.

GENERAL PALANCA: This is palanca performed on the weekend in general. It is most frequently demonstrated in notes, letters or posters that are addressed to the team and candidates, often accompanied by small gift items or tokens.

- The letter should be addressed to the team and candidates on a particular weekend. It should include the actual palanca that you will be providing to the weekend - such as:
 - A gift of prayer. Let them know that you will be praying for them. Perhaps you will pray for the weekend every time you have to stop at a red light, or something like that. They should know it. (And you should be sure to honor your commitment). .
 - A gift of sacrifice: Perhaps you made something that you are giving to the weekend. Let them know the spiritual significance of the item.
 - Try to include an encouraging scripture. Using the theme scripture of the weekend helps to promote the unity of the weekend.
 - The letter shouldn't be too long. A short note to the point will do.
 - This is where you can refer to your own weekend ("I sat where you are sitting...")
 - If possible, include small tokens for the team and candidates. The items should have some spiritual significance and can be as simple as some chocolate or candy, as complex as craft items that you and your Reunion Group made, and anything in between. Remember it's the thought, prayer and service that's important, not the actual item itself.
 - Posters with brief notes signed by individuals in your church or Reunion Group are an excellent form of general palanca.
 - General palanca is also provided in other ways:
 - Providing the decorated palanca bags for the weekend;
 - Providing candy for the tables;

SERVICE PALANCA: This palanca is service performed before, during, and immediately after the weekend, often behind the scenes and without specific recognition.

- Assisting with set-up and tear-down for the weekend;
- Running errands to obtain supplies during the weekend;
- Serving as kitchen help.

Palanca is a great way to support the team and the candidates and for you to be a part of the awesome work that God is doing on the weekend. Be creative - have fun with it - and let God touch hearts through you!